

313 Wood is chosen for its degree of hardness and weight and also for its shape according to the purposes of the object to be made. The main forms used are (1) long, slender, light (or heavy) shafts; (2) hollow logs; (3) roots with a well-defined arc; (4) long, straight, slender trunks with thick roots running off at a right angle from the shaft; (5) forked sticks; (6) ends of branches with many twigs and leaves; (7) any variety of dry wood; and (8) very large light wood tree trunks.

314 Three types of bark are used: (1) a long, thick, wide type found on the trunk of the larger eucalyptus; (2) thin paper-like bark from the Melaleuca; and (3) long thin fibers of root bark easily macerated.

[252] Many varieties of leaves are technological material. They are usually gathered in bundles by breaking off branches, but one large-leaved species is used singly as a plate on which to put fresh meat for cooking.

The long reeds of the water-lily ponds, spear grass particularly, and many other varieties of reeds are utilized.

237 The few animal materials used are, from land animals: kangaroo fat, kangaroo gut; kangaroo leg bones, bird feathers, bird bones (particularly leg), opossum fur, opossum gut and human hair; from sea animals: sting-ray prongs, fish and shark vertebrae, bivalve shells, and the melon shell.

317 Deposits of red ocher and pipe clay are mined along certain portions of the seacoast. Yellow ocher is found in outcroppings. Round river stones about the size of goose eggs are gathered. Diorite stones are also used. Quartzite is quarried from outcroppings. Ordinary earth and sand are used in making houses and ceremonial objects on the ground.

342 Rock ledges forming caves are utilized as shelters during the rainy season.

312 Rock basins which catch rain water are used as types of primitive cisterns to supply water in the absence of wells and fresh-water courses.

3. General Description of Technical Methods Used in Making Raw Materials into Cultural Artifacts

000 Only the general methods by which raw material is formed into artifacts will be discussed here. Each specific technique will be described in the section dealing with the articles manufactured.

412 The chief tools used with food are the ground stone axe,⁴ a knife (formerly made of bone, but, since the Malay contacts, of iron), and a variety of bivalve shell.

322 Cylindrical wooden articles are made by cutting down a tree or

⁴ The iron tomahawk is now used in its place.

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Plate 1. A craftsman at njilpidji, the far-famed stone spear quarry in the hinterland of Blue Mud Bay, examining flint spear heads called *njambi*. These spear heads are encased in a special sheath of paperbark (*Melaleuca*) to which the name *djalik* is applied, which gives its name to *kumur djalik*, the quarter in the ceremonial exchange cycle from which most of these fine spear heads enter North and Central Arnhem Land. On the left are two bundles each containing about a dozen *njambi*, neatly wrapped in paperbark, ready for transport inland for *weji*, as goodwill presents for partners within the ceremonial exchange cycle. The smooth stone implements on the left are the hammer stones used by the spear maker to strike off flakes from a core of flint dug out of the quarry.

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9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943) 1949
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Plate 4. A section of the legendary flint quarry at gillipidji which covers several acres of ground. Here the blocks or cores of flint used in the making of flint spear heads and knives, called *gāmbi*, are shown as they are quarried from the ground.

[p. 58 (A)]

"from *warnba*" (the people of the west) entered the area 177
principally from the south-west, by way of the Raimbaräna 411
tribe, members of which have long been in the habit of 431
travelling down to outlying cattle stations and even to the
overland stock route, and that this food then came east.

Again, the most characteristic type of spear in use 411
throughout Arnhem Land, including the northern shore- 431
line, is *nämbi*, a hunting and fighting spear with a de-
tachable flint head, (see frontispiece), *nämbi lirra*, (*lirra*, lit.
tooth), mounted with hard beeswax and not with resin.
There are only two quarries from which flint spear (135)
heads are derived, but the best, the ones properly called (316)
nämbi, come from the quarry at *nillipidji*, in the hills near
the Walker River in the hinterland of Blue Mud Bay. From
this one quarry, of almost legendary renown, come most of
the flint spear heads of Eastern Arnhem Land. These *nämbi*
lirra are generally passed from hand to hand encased in a
neat sheath of *Melaleuca* bark (*bärukällu*) called *djulk*—a
name applied only to the sheath of this one type of spear
and giving its name to *kumur djulk*, the quarter (*kumur*)
from which these spear heads enter and of which they are
the most characteristic feature. Great bundles of these
fine spear heads pass from hand to hand throughout Eastern
Arnhem Land, and even farther away to the south, beyond
the Roper River, as well as to the west across the Liverpool.
The second quarry, mentioned above, is located in the
ironwood and which has now become elevated to the level of (778)
clan totem. In bygone days glass bottles which were occasionally 425
washed up on the beaches possessed special social value as material 415
for scraps and cutting implements. Similarly the wooden Malay
anchor, with a single fluke, which was used by early visitors who
came to Arnhem Land from the Celebes, has acquired a symbolic
significance which is quite distinct from its original material value
as the anchor (*luḡu*, lit. the foot) of a prau.

THE SECOND QUARRY, MENTIONED ABOVE, IS LOCATED IN

411 Liverpool area, but spear heads from this source are regarded ^{THE}
 431 as much inferior to the *nāmbi*, and are also known by a
 • [316] distinctive name.
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166 This much even the newcomer, who has his eyes about
 431 him, sees for himself. It is clear that *gerri* circulate freely
 in Arnhem Land and far beyond, that the movements
 of certain special elements of material culture are extensive,
 and that they are not dependent upon the entry of the white
 man or the breaking down of the culture. As we have seen,
 the movements of the people themselves are restricted
 generally to their own clan territories and to those of a few
 neighbouring groups with whom a special relationship has
 been established, except on certain ceremonial occasions, or
 on *miriño* (war-making or avenging) expeditions. At other
 times they do not move very far afield, or at least they did
 not do so in former times. And again, we have seen that
 the very nature of the social organisation, the division of
 the whole of the territory among totemic clans each with
 its own intense internal solidarity and its equally strong
 opposition to other clans, was calculated to hinder and
 restrict, rather than to encourage, free intercourse between
 clans whose territories lay any distance apart.

431 How then are the *gerri* which bear, unmistakably, the
 stamp of origin in far away territories, actually circulated?
 By what means are they passed from group to group, and
 what is the motive force which brings boomerangs as well
 as other elements foreign to this culture at least two or three
 hundred miles from their place of origin, into a territory
 where their very function is lost? What, again, causes
 parcels containing *nāmbi* to be brought considerably more
 than a hundred miles from the quarry where they were
 made? How do pounding and grinding stones, which are

pounding stones called *poipuro* (page 71) it is exported as *gerri* within the ceremonial exchange system.

It is part of my thesis to show that an important function served by the ceremonial exchange cycle is in supplying this incentive, this motive for fine craftsmanship, the anticipation of the ritual and pageantry, by adding romance or "glamour" to work which would otherwise be drudgery. A man does not as a rule set out to manufacture a stone axe as he may a fish spear or a hunting spear, to satisfy an immediate need. Such an implement requires hours, even days, of grinding and polishing after the preliminary rough shaping of the hard stone. But, as it has been pointed out, these axes are made by a craftsman who probably learned the craft from his father and are accumulated as *gerri* which will be presented on some future ceremonial occasion to "pay back" a present that the maker has received from one of his exchange partners, or they are used to create an obligation which his partner will later discharge.

The stone quarry at *njillipidji* where *nambi lirra* are made, covers acres of ground, and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of spear heads come from the quarry in the course of a year. Like the stone axe heads, these flint heads are not made for immediate use, but are passed from *Wagilläk* territory—in bundles of a dozen or so, each wrapped neatly in the paperbark sheath called *djalk*—to reciprocate ceremonial presents of *muadäk*, or to build up goodwill and prestige. Big bundles are sent north and north-west, in the knowledge that they will be reciprocated ultimately with other *gerri* of a traditional kind and of at least equivalent value.

From the orientation of a man of *Mildjini* clan of the *Glyde River*, the people to the north who occupy the territory along the northern shoreline, at *Glyde Inlet*, and *Banyan*

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